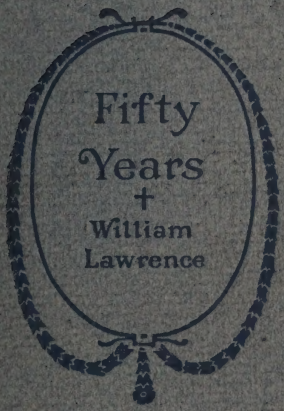
Fifty
Years
+
William
Lawrence

REFERENCE LIBRARY OF
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
2 PARK STREET, BOSTON

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES
EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF
THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.
Archive
Collection

This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

FIFTY YEARS

FIFTY YEARS

BY

WILLIAM LAWRENCE, D.D., LL.D.

Bishop of Massachusetts

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1923

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY WILLIAM LAWRENCE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

TO THE YOUNG MEN
IN COLLEGE, DIVINITY SCHOOL
AND THE MINISTRY
AND TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE
THAT HAVE GONE INTO A FAR COUNTRY
WHO HAVE BEEN MY
STUDENTS, FRIENDS, AND SUPPORTERS
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK

FIFTY YEARS

FIFTY YEARS

I

FRIENDS have told me that I have been Bishop of Massachusetts thirty years. I can hardly believe it. Assuming the fact, however, my memory runs back through thirty to fifty years. Hence, in writing an address which my loyal Diocese asked me to give in the Cathedral on the Anniversary Day, October 5th, I have included the half-century from 1873 to 1923, in order to sketch the movement of my thought and faith from early manhood on; for my experience is typical of thousands of others; and the young men and women of to-day may catch some thoughts, perhaps some inspiration, from it.

I was born in Boston over seventy-three years ago: and was baptized in St. Paul's Church, which is now the Cathe-

dral, where my father and mother were confirmed and were communicants. I have therefore been a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States over one half its history and have known men and women whose lives ran close to the Revolution.

My father was a successful merchant and manufacturer, but was at heart and in deed a farmer. He financed the emigrants to make Kansas a free State — hence "Lawrence," Kansas. He disapproved of John Brown, but helped him; ran for Governor when he was sure of defeat; was Treasurer of Harvard College and drilled the students at the opening of the Civil War; with Henry Lee he recruited the Second Cavalry; headed subscription lists, raised money for Harvard Memorial Hall and all sorts of enterprises; founded two colleges in the West; built churches and worshipped in them. Our home was in

Brookline, then a rural village. He rode horseback, mostly on half-broken brutes, for over fifty years; skated until he was nearly seventy; and made friends with every one in town, especially the boys and girls. He never sent his children to church, but always went with them, and we knew that his religion was the real thing.

He always said, however, that, although his boys might inherit certain qualities, they would not learn much by looking on or listening to advice. Each one of us must get his own experience. In this I think he was wrong. I am sure that we gained more by looking on and listening than he thought.

My mother was a woman of rare beauty and dignity, reserved, especially in matters of personal religion. As to her administrative ability my father used to say that General Grant, if he knew her, would put her at the head of the commissary department.

My boyhood was passed in a large and happy family which, through the beautiful character of my parents, daily family prayer, and Sunday worship, was saturated with Christian piety. Attending the public schools, the Town Meetings and the rallies in the Civil War, I was filled with the spirit of American Democracy. I went through Harvard University, whose mottoes are "The Truth" and "For Christ and His Church." Knowing personally through my father's friends some of the leaders of New England's thought, literature, and religion, I was brought up to face changes of thought and faith with an open mind and with courage.

A few facts may suggest to you how far away those days were. The universe as we know it to-day was beyond man's imagination. To us boys our world was the centre of the universe, and the sun a blazing ball of unknown size. Stellar

photography, spectrum analysis, and those other instrumentalities which have shown us the speed of light, the distance of planets and stars and the substance of them, were not to be discovered for a generation and more.

As for this earth, the greater part of Asia, including China and Japan, Africa, Australia, the Balkans and the Near East, and Russia, were practically unopened. Ocean travel was almost altogether by sail. The population of the United States stopped practically at the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, except for a few adventurous spirits who crossed the plains and Rockies or rounded Cape Horn.

The shrinkage of the world by rapid transit and interchange of thought and people, the crowding of races upon each other, with the consequent competition and increase of national and racial consciousness, were still to come.

Although vaccination against smallpox, and anæsthetics, were in limited use, modern medicine and surgery did not exist. Typhoid fever, consumption, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and other diseases ran their course. Preventive hygiene was unknown. Every autumn an appreciable percentage of the people had typhoid fever: many died. I had it, as did two of my sisters, and lived. It seems only a few years since I used to be called to homes in my parish in Lawrence where children were dying of diphtheria or typhoid fever or both; the mothers praying, the doctors almost helpless. In the seventies Pasteur and Lister announced the discoveries which have been the means of saving millions on millions of lives. The application of electricity was practically unknown. Modern science and the theory of evolution, which have revolutionized our interpretations of nature and religious faith, were not. And

modern psychology, with its suggestions of unknown mental and spiritual forces, was undreamed of.

And yet New England had a literature, a prestige, a character, culture, and enterprise which its people of to-day may well envy.

The date, however, upon which I want to set your thoughts is that of 1873: fifty years ago, when, after graduating from college, I was studying for the ministry; indeed, my conscious and intelligent interest in Christian thought and movements, practically, too, my ministry, is about a half-century long. It is upon the movements in this period, especially as they bear upon the Christian Faith, that I shall dwell.

As I started from my home for the Theological Seminary, timid, humble, driven by a sense of duty and loyalty to Christ, President Hopkins, of Williams College,

the great educator and Christian philosopher of his day, who was a guest of my father, said good-bye to me, saying, "You think that you have settled some questions; but you will have to begin all over again." What he meant I could not then understand; but a few weeks revealed his meaning, and now, half a century later, some of the questions are still unsettled.

Through boyhood and to some degree in college I had accepted the Christian Faith as it had been taught me. While the Jesus of the Gospels was a vivid story, the chief emphasis was upon the Old Testament, and of course both Old and New Testaments, being inspired, were true to the word and letter. The world was created in six days in the year 4004 B.C., for Genesis and the date on the margin of the family Bible said so. Adam and Eve, the serpent, Noah and the flood destroying

everybody and everything on the earth but the family and the animals entering the Ark two by two, Jonah and the whale, Joshua and the sun, Daniel and the lions' den, the three young men in the fiery furnace, were facts as real as anything that happened yesterday. God from out of heaven sent His word or put out His hand and stopped the sun or the plagues, did anything that He wanted to; and by His miracles showed that He was God. These were the leading ideas in a boy's religion; whoever denied or questioned any of them was a sceptic or an atheist and liable to be damned. A heaven of bliss and a hell of eternal fire were as vivid as the blue, serene sky over my head or a big bonfire by night.

To be sure, our mother and father told us of a loving heavenly Father and of the boy Jesus and the Saviour on the Cross; but these seemed to have no close connec-

tion with those other things which were more closely associated with preaching and the Sunday School. My home had a happy religious life, but oh! the terrors that thousands of boys and girls suffered. The worst, however, was not in the physical fears and horrible dreads, but in the lack of intellectual and moral integrity required to meet the situation. The questions of young people are always searching. In those days the brains of our elders, our parents, Sunday School teachers, and ministers were forced to great agility in meeting the problems of inconsistency of statement in the Bible, impossible situations, evident errors of fact, and the revelations of science. We were led to assume that there were two worlds, the one of our everyday, matter-of-fact life, where answers to questions were straight, and the other of religions, where faith seemed to play havoc with

common honesty. We felt, but never said, that the whole situation was unreal and false; it offended our moral sense.

When a Junior at Harvard I went one day to a lecture by Professor Agassiz on the glacial theory which was arousing keen popular interest. Doubts had entered my mind as to the accuracy of the account of the creation of the world in six days. Defenders of the Faith had already begun to concede that six days were six æons; that possibly the serpent himself did not talk with Eve — most unsatisfactory concessions, they seemed to me. Nevertheless, the date 4004 still stood in the margin of the Bible, and six days were six days. Think, then, of the shock given when Agassiz, of charming personality, and in broken English, said, "Gentlemen, the world is older than we have been taught to think. Its age is as if one were gently to rub a silk handkerchief across

Plymouth Rock once a year until it were reduced to a pebble."

I left that lecture thinking hard as to how the discoveries of science might destroy or perhaps glorify our faith in God and the revelation of Him in the Scriptures, and have been thinking ever since.

I had suspected and silently decided that the Bible was wrong somehow. But if one yielded to science in the Biblical account of creation, which of course was an historic fact, where was one going to stop?

You who are under fifty years of age have no conception of the searchings of heart, the sorrows over a lost faith, the anxiety of parents over children, the tragic experiences of those days. Tennyson's "In Memoriam" expresses it to a degree, but the tragedy was all about us, father against son, brother against brother.

When, therefore, I began seriously to study for the ministry, I discovered what President Hopkins meant. Problems, questions, doubts, ever-revealing truth wrestled with each other in mortal combat. The publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species," which marks the new era, was in 1859, fourteen years before my date of 1873. Its significance was just seeping through the minds of scientists, philosophers, and ecclesiastical leaders to the people. The subject of a thesis given me by my professor in Theology was, "Can a man believe in Darwinism and remain a Christian?" The professor said he could not. I knew almost nothing on the subject, though I had, of course, read the "Origin of Species." But the marshalling of facts, the evident honesty of purpose and the humility of Darwin threw me over to his side. And when the war between science and religion, so full of tragedy and

comedy, was on, I found myself in general sympathy with the standpoint of science. Why this should be I could not understand. I believed the Christian Faith; why was it not possible to support its ardent defenders? I did not then know that in ecclesiastical battles the noisy champions come first to the front, and that the strongest, wisest, and most thoughtful of the theologians quietly wait, study the situation, and reconstruct their lines of action.

One day I passed across the hall from the lecture room of my conservative theological professor, who spent his time defending his conception of the Faith by quoting proof texts taken from Old Testament and New Testament, with little regard for their historic setting, to the room of a young professor who had caught the spirit of the modern Christian scholar, and who, when faced with a critical ques-

tion, said, "Gentlemen, it is not for me to defend the Faith. A true faith will defend itself. It is my duty to guide you with open mind, humble spirit, and pure heart to the Truth, the Truth alone, wherever it may lead you; and be ye sure that it will always lead you to a fuller knowledge of Christ, who is the Truth. Hold as for your life to that attitude of mind. Seek the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." From that hour I have been free: not free from questions, problems, troubles, and doubts, but at the very foundation of my faith confident, serene, and free. God as Creator, All-Father, Loving Saviour, guiding Spirit leading on to Truth, can never be dethroned. Every revelation through science, philosophy, ancient religions, the Holy Scriptures, tested by higher and lower criticism, leads and ever will lead to a fuller knowledge of Him. God, His universe, His children,

are bound together in one consistent, living unity; He and Nature cannot deny each other. Whatever, therefore, seems to give way, whether it be some outwork of the Faith or some inner well of spiritual supply upon which the life of the Christian Faith seems to depend, the Truth which is God revealed through nature and man will stand; and therein is my trust, my life. The best defence of the Faith is in the seeking and standing for the Truth, while living in the Spirit of Christ, who is the Truth. Herein is freedom.

I am not and never have been a scholar. The results of modern thought in religion, science, and philosophy I have had to take at second hand. My judgment has been dependent, first, upon the religious principles inherited through history and parentage and gained by experience; then upon my confidence in the scholars and middlemen who present the

case of the fresh revelation of truth or error; and, third, upon the way in which the truths find me and meet my moral and spiritual nature: for each man must make his own decision for himself. Even Newman acted upon the right of his private judgment in deciding to submit to Rome.

It is impossible to tell fully or even sketch the development of my religious thought from 1873 to this day. All that I can do is to touch upon a few of the salient features.

The theories of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and of the inspiration of every word, received their fatal blow in the sixties and seventies, though thousands on thousands of the faithful know it not at this day. I can still hear the tone of a strong preacher ring out with the sound of an alarm, "If I could not believe that Joshua made the sun stand still in the heavens, I should lose faith in the

Bible and in God." Just as real to me, too, are the echoes of sad voices of faithful men and women bewailing the fact that their rector had said that perhaps the incidents in the story of the Garden of Eden, of Adam, Eve, and the serpent, were not historic facts. For hard upon the heels of the iconoclasts created by discoveries of science came the even more dangerous literary critics. How well I remember the first time that I read the sentence of Coleridge, that the test of the inspiration of the Scriptures is in the way in which they "find you, the way in which they touch your moral and spiritual nature"; and the dictum of Jowett, "Interpret the Bible as any other book" — phrases which seemed to give the death stroke to much that I held dear. Rightly understood, however, they were the Magna Charta of modern Biblical criticism. "Essays and Reviews," published in 1861,

caused a deep sensation. The first essay by young Frederick Temple, entitled "The Education of the World," placed the Old Testament upon an historic basis and overthrew the popular, orthodox conception of the sacred books. Bishop Wilberforce, of Oxford, at the time the most eloquent preacher and leader of the Church of England, solemnly demanded that all the essayists be compelled to withdraw from the ministry. It is suggestive of the quick changes of the times that the same Temple became Archbishop of Canterbury. What was there left for the faithful to believe when they were told that scholars and critics had proved that much that Moses was recorded to have written was written generations after his death; that it was surely impossible for him to have written the account of his own burial; that many of the Psalms of David were not composed by David; that the

sacred books had been compiled and tampered with; that many of the prophecies did not foretell events; that historic facts as stated were untrue or no facts at all? Even a Bishop of the Church, a Missionary Bishop, beloved by the Zulus for his heroic work, Colenso of Natal, in "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua," published in 1863, rejected the Mosaic authorship of the first five books. He was deposed and excommunicated by his Metropolitan, but upon an appeal to the Ecclesiastical Court in England, the decision of the Metropolitan was reversed and he stayed in the field.

The wave of questions, doubts, and denials swept on. Of course the champions of the Faith gave answer to the critics and enemies, each in his own way fervid, strong, specious, honest. The young people of the day were bewildered. Their loss of faith was tragic. There grad-

ually emerged, however, a sense of confidence that spiritual truths were forging to the front, that the Old Testament had higher purposes than that of teaching science and showing forth miracles. The patriarchs, men of their own generation, though touched with the frailties of human nature, became to us real men, men inspired of God; the Psalms, whether David or others wrote them, were sung for their own sake; the prophets were statesmen of their day, setting forth in language of their time the principles of righteousness and anticipating nobler times to come.

Just as we were settling our minds to appreciate and rejoice in these revelations, the critic moved from the Old Testament to the New. In these books and epistles we had or thought we had facts, stated in terms of comparatively modern history. But here again traditions, be-

liefs, and beloved narratives were questioned or denied. The recognition of the orderly working of nature weakened confidence in the miraculous, and as years passed theologians and exegetical scholars, esteemed conservative and orthodox, interpreted scenes, teachings, and epistles in a way that would have astounded themselves ten years before.

To the great body of the people the victory seemed to be with the critics, the champions of science, the exponents of materialism, and many leaders of the Faith were depressed. There arose, however, scholars, teachers, exegetes, and theologians who had been quietly studying and thinking, sifting the researches of the Germans, analyzing the imaginative results of French scholarship, testing all in the quiet, sensible temper of Englishmen who, firm in their confidence in some facts, laid emphasis upon the spiritual temper and rev-

elations of the Scriptures. Those who affected me were, in Germany, Ewald; and in England, Coleridge, Robertson, Maurice, Lightfoot, and Westcott; in this country, Bushnell, my friends Phillips Brooks and Alexander V. G. Allen, and others.

The thought of God, the Omnipotent Creator, the King, who set creation going and from His distant throne governed nature and man as an autocrat, interfering with nature's laws as he willed, punishing the wicked, rewarding the guilty, fell into the background of my thought before the revelation of the Heavenly Father, who, as Creator, Saviour, lives in and through nature and man. He is immanent — within us; His spirit transfigures us.

I was baffled again and again by the incompleteness of the definition of God. Some theologians described God in such mechanical or logical terms that it seemed

sometimes as if He were a mathematical proposition. But because God is infinite in power and love, we hail the mystery of His being which baffles our powers of description. The shafts of light strike up heavenward; we follow each; we cannot see them mingle, but we know that somewhere they become one. I cannot describe the Triune God; no creed can describe Him; we would not worship Him if it could. We know, however, that the Lord our God is One God; we would hold that truth though the heavens fall. In the life of Jesus we see the very character of God Himself: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and in the Spirit which compasses the world and inspires every child of God we feel the presence of God Himself. One tragedy of religious faith is in the incompleteness of language. That word "person" which connotes so different a thing to us from that which it did in

Latin and among other peoples has led millions of people astray; they have tried to make three persons one person; they have been driven to a logical Tritheism; or, breaking from Tritheism, have lost the truth and mystery of the Incarnation and of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

No discovery of science, no higher or lower criticism, has taken from us our faith in God who is God the Father, God revealed in His Son Jesus, God working through His Spirit; and when we realize how our conception of the universe has been enlarged ten thousand times, how the history of the planets, of this little world and of the upgrowth of man from lower animal forms to his divine estate, has opened wondrous revelations, we have a conception of God ten thousand times greater, nobler, and more spiritual than was that of our fathers. He, so wondrous, dwelleth in us and we in Him.

We used to be taught that we were born in sin; that each one of us, through the taint of Adam's sin and the fact of our own personal guilt, would be lost unless the innocent victim prepared from the foundation of the world had borne our sins and by His sufferings and death had appeased the anger of God and ransomed us. The eternal truth of the innocent suffering for the guilty was expressed in mechanical and sometimes hideous terms. With what relief, with what a leap of joy people read the sermons of Robertson and the writings of Bushnell on the Atonement. To be sure, these men were heterodox, but their ring was true; and to the young the ring of truth is the final note.

The life of Jesus, so loving, winning, and heroic, called us; we lost ourselves in Him; He was a real man; He was our Ideal, our brother, our life, and we went

with him to the Cross. He suffered for us, of course; His was the complete sacrifice, in the same spirit in which the young hero suffered and died at Gettysburg for his country and ourselves, and we, won by Him, entered into the spirit of His life and were saved from disloyalty, sin, and moral death. The Resurrection of Jesus was the token, the seal of the truth that through such a life and death must come spiritual victory and immortality. And the history of the Apostles and the Church testified to the power and presence of God, revealed and working through His Spirit.

When with these revelations we turned back to the Scriptures, the story of God's dealings with His people took on a new and different perspective. What used to be important, even essential, what were esteemed historic facts, fell into the background. Modern science had convinced

us that a just God would not or could not autocratically break through the laws of nature to work wonders; but modern science had not and has not such a complete knowledge of God and His methods of work as to assure us that we can fathom the meaning of every act; modern psychology, modern science, recognize laws, habits, and expressions of nature as yet beyond our ken; and what relation these have to the unusual or to what seem to be the suspension or breaking of natural law we know not. We wait for fresh discoveries, we welcome every shaft of truth, we believe what we may consistently believe, and we know that no discovery which is true can shake our faith in Him who is the Truth: in Him, I say, for it is the Christ, His life, His character, His spirit, that we cling to as our salvation.

I have to say frankly, therefore, that many events that I used to think mi-

raculous, or what were called supernatural, I cannot so esteem now. The incident may be just as wondrous, if the story reveals a fresh phase of the life of Jesus. I still believe that there are events at present inexplicable under any theory of our present knowledge of nature's laws; miraculous we may call them. Whether soon, or in the distant future, or ever, they will be revealed to us as part of the workings of nature as men may then know, it is of little moment to me. The life and character of God as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ cannot be hidden nor his leadership of the sons of men lost.

The Great Boston Fire in 1872 destroyed Old Trinity Church on Summer Street, where Phillips Brooks by a ministry of three years in Boston had so interpreted the Scriptures, creeds, and faith as to bring a new Gospel of love, peace, and joy to hundreds of people; a Gospel

which in its fulness his beloved mother, of New England's stern theology, could never bring herself fully to accept. The New Trinity Church was not consecrated until 1877. Hence for over four years the congregation of Trinity Church, and the steadily increasing number of people from all churches and no church, worshipped in Huntington Hall of the Institute of Technology. One can hardly picture a place less adapted to worship or more depressing to a preacher of the truths and mysteries of the Christian Faith.

It was there, however, that Phillips Brooks really found himself and his relations to the tide of changing thought. Gaining a firmer hold upon the situation, ever loyal to Christ and the Church, he had been reading and thinking, knowing that the freedom of thought which comes with a determination to seek and find the Truth would bring him fuller knowledge

of God and of His Son Jesus Christ. Having gotten his bearings and confident in the righteousness of his position, he poured forth with his torrent of eloquence thoughts, interpretations, and revelations for which the people had been yearning. I knew him intimately as a young man knows an elder, and in talks in his study wherein I was a willing pupil I watched his development to the fulness of his powers in the later years of Trinity's pulpit. What he said in his study he preached in the Hall of Technology; and I, more familiar than most with his thought, could feel the sigh of relief rise from the congregation as he lifted from their lives shadow after shadow of depressing thought which had settled upon them through the theology of their parents and earlier generations.

Of the many questions besetting the people, especially college students and

those who were closest to modern thought, I mention only three in order to suggest how they were met by Phillips Brooks. Of course other preachers and writers were meeting them too in their way, but his method I know.

One question which would brook no specious answer was, "How can you reconcile with divine inspiration the cruelties and immoralities of the Old Testament, in which God seemed to delight, the stories of the massacre of the Amalekites, of the deliberate murder of Sisera by Jael; the Song of the Psalmist, 'Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children, and throweth them against the stones'?" It is passing strange to us now how high-minded and otherwise truth-loving men would juggle with facts, distort language, and evade conclusions in order to bolster up a theory of inspiration or an interpretation which they deemed essential to the Faith.

How well I recall the voice and flashing eye of Phillips Brooks as, standing by the lectern pulpit in Huntington Hall, he lifted the people to such a spiritual conception of the inspiration of the Old Testament as to enable them to see how God, assuming the freedom of men's will to do evil or good, had patiently led them up through childhood and savagery until they could begin to appreciate the glory of His purity, truth, and love as revealed in the incarnation of His Son. Facts, interpretations, truths, errors, shook themselves into right perspective, and the congregation realized how the whole creation had "groaned and travailed" until the day when the word was made flesh and men "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Again, a hard theology which had dominated the thought of the Puritans had

taught that only those who responded consciously to the call of Christ would be saved. Of the great mass of men, women, and children only a remnant were to be found worthy, and at the death of each one the question of the elect or damned was settled for eternity. We wonder now how men and women of sweet Christian temper would reiterate these things and believe them.

From New England's families heroic missionaries had gone by the score to preach this grim Gospel to the heathen and to snatch the brands from the burning of hell. This had been throughout the ages a dominant motive, of Roman Catholic and Puritan, of Ignatius Loyola and the Baptist William Carey. Voices of protest were heard from free thinkers, some Unitarians and Universalists; but the dogma stood firm, and mothers wept over their wayward sons who turned away

from such a faith while the missionaries continued to go forth.

I can now hear the voice of Phillips Brooks as he pleaded with the people for a return to St. Paul's teaching, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Revolting against the doctrine of total depravity, he drove home again and again the truth that, while of course all children inherit character and taints of evil, myriads of children are not born to be damned. With all the eloquence at his command he repeated again and again that every child is a child of God; and that the Church, knowing this, calls all to baptism, the symbol of God's recognition, the gate whereby each child as he grows older has the assurance that he has been brought visibly into God's family. His words fell like refreshing rain upon a thirsty field, and the faith and joy of the congregation rose up to meet them.

Of course he was preaching what Coleridge, Maurice, and Bushnell and his own thought and prayer had taught him; but through them and a fresh study of the Scriptures he had entered into the heart of God and the Spirit of His Son. Others also preached and wrote, and the Christian truth of man's divine sonship was redeemed. Strange, is it not, that the simplest and most fundamental of Christian teachings can be hidden for centuries under a mechanical system of doctrine or a materialistic conception of the Christian faith? "The nerve of missions is cut," cried the Orthodox. As a matter of fact, the nerve of missions received new life; and since that day the Christian missionaries have, like St. Paul, gone forth with joy to bring the good news of the Son of God and to work with the heathen and their ancient faiths for ever fuller faith in God and a deeper knowledge of the Son.

One other truth, more fundamental than either of these, was redeemed and brought forth for our safety and strength. At the close of the eighteenth century New England had fought over again an ancient battle. The transcendent theology of our Puritan fathers had so elevated the divinity of Christ as to make His manhood unreal. The reaction had come in the protest of Unitarianism, which, going to the other extreme, so emphasized His humanity as to make of Him little more than a superman. This was an ancient battle, I say, for in the early Church the same streams of thought met each other. The issue was as clear then as it was a generation ago. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were reassertions of the early Church in the full humanity of Jesus, which was repeated in the Councils. The facts of His life here on earth were given in the simplest terms, "In Jesus Christ

His only Son Our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven."

The iteration of these facts brought out the great truth of the Incarnation, steadied the Church for a time and restrained her from so dehumanizing Jesus as to make Him unreal. This latter tendency has been popularly assumed to be the note of Orthodoxy, while an emphasis on His humanity has the note of Heterodoxy; and there are those to-day who are still afraid of a full recognition of the manhood of Jesus. Of course there is danger here as there is in the other extreme, but because of possible danger we cannot shrink from the facts and the truth.

Phillips Brooks, with the Fathers of

ancient days and the scholars of these days, had no fear of revealing the boy Jesus at Nazareth and Jerusalem — Jesus the young carpenter, Jesus with brothers, Jesus the young preacher, the upholder of practical righteousness, the Jesus so friendly with all sorts of people as to bring on Him the condemnation of the respectable; so dependent upon friends that in His agony in the garden He must have His comrades to watch with Him; so human that He knew not what the future would bring forth; so full of courage as to withstand the whole band of orthodox champions and sabbatarians; so idealistic as to set before men the highest standards of moral action.

Throughout my boyhood and younger manhood, whenever questions would rise as to some word or act of Jesus, we were told, "This He did as a man"; and, "This He said as the Son of God." Our teachers

seemed to have such an ability to strike either note at their pleasure as to give proof of a consistent scheme of doctrine. It was not consistent: we felt it. With what relief, therefore, we turned to Jesus Himself, "Ecce Homo," and with what faith we saw in and through Him the very face of God the Father. He came forth from God, Very God of Very God. But only in the fulness of His humanity could He mediate or bring to us the fulness of God.

Throughout these fifty years young people by the score of thousands dropped beliefs, opinions, interpretations, which they had been taught were essential to the Christian Faith. I recall now the anxious face of a Harvard student who came hurriedly into the Preachers' Room and said, "I was brought up at home a Christian boy; I came here to college and hoped to remain a follower of Christ; but

I am no longer a Christian; my faith is gone." "What is the trouble?" I asked. "I cannot any longer believe that the world was created in six days, and a friend has told me that I cannot deny that and remain a Christian." Would you believe that that conversation took place in the late eighties — and I suppose may take place even now? With what dismay the boy looked at me as I answered, "If that is the case, I am not a Christian either"; and how his face lighted up as I told him of the spiritual purpose of the Scriptures and their essential truths.

Great numbers of young people were lost to the Church and the Faith by the inability of many teachers and preachers to adjust their vision to the fuller light. The fault was not altogether theirs, for it is our duty in proving all things to hold fast that which is good; and it was very difficult then to discriminate which was the

good. Militant and brilliant scientists, like Huxley, ignorant themselves of the essentials of the Christian Faith, assumed that in following science to the end, men must lose their faith.

Young men and women of moral and spiritual slackness sometimes used their doubts as an excuse for the dropping of their faith altogether. "I have lost so much of the religion that I was taught to hold that I do not know now where I am: I give it all up." What, however, I have tried to drive home is that in the experiences through which my generation passed, young men found themselves changing the emphasis and perspective of their boyhood beliefs, and at the same time gaining a stronger hold upon the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. I know that through this testing process, faith in Jesus Christ was deeply embedded in the lives of the men and women of my day.

They have been the upbuilders of the churches and the supporters of all that is best in our civic life.

II

Up to this point I have been trying to sketch the development of my thought and of my faith during the last fifty years. This would be presumptuous and egotistical were it not that I believe that my experience reflects that of thousands of others who have lived through the same period, or a part of it, and who may receive some help by this personal recital.

Before taking up the next, and in some respects the more difficult, part of my subject, may I recall again the tremendous changes in every department of thought and life during the half-century. Biography, poetry, history, art, and philosophy have given their reactions. These changes have altered the face of the world, and have revolutionized our social and political conditions. In other words, the

inner hidden forces of thought and life have created new forms of expression or new interpretations of older forms.

The same is true in the sphere of religion. The changes in spiritual outlook, the fresh interpretations of Scriptures, demand new forms of expression or radical reinterpretations of the ancient forms.

To put the problem again in a personal way. I was brought up as a boy and college student to certain conceptions of the Christian Faith, interpretations of the Bible, the Creeds, and other standards of the Church. The question now had to be answered, "How could I, who during fifty years passed through the changes of thought which I have described, adjust them to or express them through the forms of faith, the Creeds, and other standards of the Church which were framed centuries ago?" Here again I was simply typical of thousands of others. There is no more

delicate, vital, and persistent question asked to-day by hosts of men and women than this one, as to how their religious faith as they now hold it can be honestly and consistently expressed in the ancient Creeds or in any creed. And yet the Faith is in these people, and it demands expression.

Theoretically there are persons such as scientists and philosophers who are such isolated seekers for truth that they are as free as if they were in a vacuum to carry on their studies, convictionless and creedless; though even they have to work from some hypothesis.

From this theory arises a common notion that people may work out their religious problems in complete freedom apart from any practical relation. The fact is, however, that we are men and women, living in social relations with others. Whatever may be our theories and ideals, we

have got to bring them into contact with practical thought and life: we "must ally ourselves with the imperfect."

In the working-out of the problem of the honest expression of my beliefs, I had to realize that I was a member of society, and that unless I were a consummate egotist, I must check up my beliefs with the experiences of history and with the every-day life about me. I realized also that I was a member and minister of Christ's Church. The critical question that I was compelled to ask of myself and answer honestly was, "How is it possible for me to live in the free air of the search for truth, meet the intellectual changes as they come, remain in that loyalty, and express it in form of language as well as in life?"

Is there any one to-day who is not thinking out that problem? The recital of my experience, as a typical one, may help.

From time to time four possible alternatives have been open:

1. Why should I not retain my freedom to think and search for the truth in a creedless church? Unhampered by forms of words, at liberty to express my faith and all its changes from day to day, I could live in intellectual honesty, and sincerely believe and speak what I believed.

For one reason: I have not been able to find any creedless church, if by creed we mean a form of expression of the faith that is in us. Whenever a conference of what is supposed to be such a church is held, the members always have some common standing ground of faith, even if it be only the creed that "right is right"; or that, "If there be a God, that God is love." Both these creeds, any creeds, are a limitation on one's complete liberty of thought and search for truth.

My problem was, therefore, not to find

a convictionless and creedless church, but to find one sufficiently so to satisfy my desire for liberty. Edward Everett Hale once told me that churches should make new creeds every year as birds build their nests.

I did not happen to find any church of that sort; and if I had, I question how long the church would hold together, or what practical or charitable work it could do, if the members discussed throughout the year the manufacture of a new creed. In fact, such a church must of itself disintegrate into "individualism." And pure individualism does not bring freedom, but isolation and bondage to ourselves, our moods and habits of thought.

2. At the other extreme were churches which had buttressed their faith with long creeds and catechisms, entering into and binding the details of religious thought and life.

The members of these churches were consciously bound together by a covenant, and if any one deliberately broke the convenant, he in all honor must retire. This attitude has strength up to a certain point, and efficiency. If a member, be he ever so pure a saint, believes that Joshua did not make the sun stand still, or that Isaiah did not write the Book of Isaiah, he must retire or be excommunicated. Is the Christian Church, then, composed only of those who agree to think exactly alike? What, then, is to become of the great mass of Christians who do not think alike? Have we not here a sect of Christian people, a private club composed of a group who call themselves a Christian Church?

There are, however, churches which have done away with these elaborate creeds and catechisms, as archaic and inexpressive of modern faith, and have formed new and simpler creeds, some of

them very beautiful and expressive. I sympathize deeply with such efforts, and yet I find that, as the years go on, even these creeds are subject to changes to meet later thought and sometimes to radical revision. Their creation is founded on the presumption that a creed should be closely or literally interpreted, as was the case with the elaborate creeds which were discarded; and so long as the theory of literal interpretation holds, the creeds must be continually changing with changing thought, involving perpetual discussion on the terms of faith, a tendency to individualism, and the loss of a sense of corporate unity which is an essential of strength in the Christian Church.

3. The third alternative was that from which our fathers in the Reformation revolted, submission to the Church of Rome. Born and bred as I was an American, in the liberty of thought which is our heri-

tage, I could not find that liberty in submission to a Church which, however noble in many features, is founded on the principle of autocracy, not democracy, and which has in countries where it has been dominant suppressed liberty of thought; a Church which, though world-wide in its organization, is governed by foreign influences and a foreign ruler; a Church which has as its essentials of the Faith certain dogmas which I believe are not in harmony with the teachings of the Scripture.

4. The fourth alternative I took, that of remaining in the Church of my birth. In making this decision, I was led to a fresh study of the Church, and learned more intimately than before some of its salient features.

It is an historic Church, with liturgy, ministry, and creeds reaching back to the beginnings of Christianity; and, because historic, has not only those elements of

faith which have weathered the storms of centuries, but which have been continually open to readjustments and fresh interpretations.

It is a Church wherein the Creeds do not stand by themselves as intellectual statements of the Faith, but are a part of the whole body of doctrine, discipline, and worship; these are all inextricably bound up together, interpreting each other; they have no mechanical equality of emphasis, but are a living whole, wherein are features of varied importance and perspective. It is a Church, too, wherein the Creeds, the expressions of the Faith, are interwoven with the spiritual and ethical elements of the Faith.

It is a Church which, with the wealth of ancient tradition and glory, has within it the principles for which our fathers fought in the Reformation, and which have been essential in the upbuilding of modern civ-

ilization and the rights of the people — the sacredness of the individual, from which springs religious liberty.

I am well aware that it may be said, "Of course, a religious man who claims to be a seeker for truth usually finds a way to settle in the old ruts: truth is to him what he chooses to make truth." It may be so. I am sure that associations, affection, and traditions have influenced me; but who is there that is not influenced by them? It is enough to say that taking all the conditions in hand, I have tried to walk the path of truth, and in so doing have tried to be honest with myself, and with the Church, and as may be felt when I have told my experiences, this has not always been an easy task.

In my younger days I had, as I have already said, a conception of the Church wherein all the Articles of the Faith were of equal weight, to every one of which

every member subscribed, and if he could not believe in every one in its original intent, he must give up his membership or be excommunicated. It was a convenant of honor between the members; call it a church, a sect, a religious club, or what you will. I gradually perceived that this was an impossible situation; some Articles of the Faith were more important than others; some were essential, others not essential. But which were which?

I found to my surprise one day that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures was not an Article of Faith in the Church; nor the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But Bishop Colenso had been condemned by the public opinion of the Church of England for believing these things. Did the Church condemn men for questioning or denying the non-essentials? Was it or was it not the duty of a member or minister of the Church to resign, or was it his

duty to stay in the Church until he was cast out? Was it not well that the contrast of questions of essentials and non-essentials be thrashed out? In the tremendous changes of thought in these fifty years was it not incumbent on the members of the Church to study anew her Faith and the forms of expression of the Faith?

I repeat the phrases, "the Faith," and "the forms of expression of the Faith," because they should be clearly distinguished from each other. The Faith is that which I or members of the Church, or the Church, hold to as the spiritual foundation of our life. It is something so deep, so mystical and vital that men cannot fully express it. The form of expression of the Faith, the formal Creeds, or formularies, or ritual, or our common language, is an imperfect medium. It can never be an exact or full expression, and must be framed in changing forms to meet chang-

ing moods; or, if the form remains, and the wording of the Creed stands for generations, it must be interpreted and reinterpreted as the generations pass.

Study and experience in the ministry led me to answers to some of these questions, and as years went by, it became more and more clear that the process of thought through which I had passed in the interpretation of the Scriptures was repeating itself in a measure in the interpretation of the Prayer Book, the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. The Scriptures, through their reinterpretation in the light of modern thought, had taken on new meaning and value: they were transfigured by spiritual and moral glory far beyond anything that I had dreamed of. In the falling into the background of much that our fathers thought essential, there had come to the front the great spiritual purpose of the whole, the

unconscious preparation of the world for the coming of the Son of God.

The Prayer Book contains a body of literature, poetry, prayer, history, and Creeds. To every member of the Church and especially to every minister, comes the responsibility of studying these in the light of modern thought and experience, and so far as is necessary, reinterpreting them.

As a soldier reads again his commission to freshen his memory as to his responsibilities and duties, I turned again to the Office of Ordination to the Priesthood. There I was again impressed with the emphasis upon "the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church," not as a series of articles, but as one whole, for to that phrase every candidate for the Priesthood subscribes. I noted, too, that the responsibility is laid upon the Priest to "teach nothing as necessary to eternal salvation,

but that which he shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture." That he "minister the Doctrine, and the Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded and as this Church hath received the same, according to the Commandments of God"; that he "will be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word"; that he "reverently obey his Bishop, and other chief Ministers, who according to the Canons of the Church may have the charge and government over him; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions and submitting himself to their godly judgments."

In all this, however, it became more and more clear to me that upon the Priest when ordained, upon me when I was ordained was laid the responsibility of decid-

ing what is "necessary to eternal salvation"; what are "erroneous and strange doctrines"; what is "godly." And if objection to my decisions should be made, the final judgment would be, not with my Bishop, not with popular orthodoxy, not with public clamor, but with a trial by my peers; for ours is a constitutional and not an autocratic Church.

These statements may seem to some persons details of small moment. They are, however, the charter of liberty of the clergy; and it is well that the clergy should be reminded of them; for during my episcopate I have learned that it is by recognizing the rights and duties of each other and by full mutual confidence that Bishop and clergy can work most happily and with a common understanding of each other. Such mutual confidence will close our mouths when we are tempted to say of any of our brethren with whose doctrine

or forms of worship we do not agree that he has no right in the Church, or insinuate that by remaining in the Church he is evasive or intellectually dishonest, or wants to hold his living. Far better err on the side of over-confidence than be guilty of a lack of charity.

To return, however, to the personal question as to how I could with continually changing views and interpretation honestly remain in the Church, repeat the Creeds, and take part in its Sacraments. It became clearer and clearer to me that the Church was a Church and not a sect; that its spirit was not exclusive, but inclusive; that there were many opinions, doctrines, interpretations, and teachings deemed essential to the Faith, upon the value of which the Church has never spoken. William R. Huntington, for instance, had been denied ordination for a time because he believed not in the eternal

damnation of the wicked, but in their annihilation; he stood his ground, and his Bishop finally yielded. Other young men were held up for looseness of views on the inspiration of the Scriptures, on the theories of the Atonement, and definitions of a valid call.

It gradually dawned upon the Bishops, clergy, and people that these were not essential doctrines. The essentials of the Faith began to be reduced in number. However, the Creeds stood as the bulwark of doctrine on which the body of the Church depended. With great surprise I discovered that the Creeds as such were not mentioned in the Ordinal, simply the doctrine, discipline, and worship contained in the Prayer Book, in Prayers, Litany, Creeds, Sacraments, and Ordinal.

From one point of view these involve an appalling amount of "doctrine"; from another, the amount of literature, its va-

riety of prose, poetry, dogma, and ethics, offer and encourage large liberty of interpretation. Men cannot think alike on all these things; hence there must be recognized and gladly recognized wide divergences of views. The Church was enlarging, as I saw it, from a sect to a Church. The ignorance was mine; she has always been a Church; and millions of people like myself have mistaken her, for she has an historic background. Modern laws and statutes must be strictly interpreted; interpretations of ancient charters and declarations of fundamental principles entail large liberty of thought and interpretation. The Magna Charta of Runnymede and the Constitution of the United States allow larger liberty of interpretation than the last law passed by Parliament or Congress.

I have said that there is no mention of Creed. I do not mean by this that there is

no mention of the evidence of vital faith, but of the formal expression of faith in the language of a creed; and yet the two Creeds stand in the very heart of our daily service and sacraments, and are assumed by most of us to be the tests of faith. Without these Creeds many people feel that the foundations of the Church would be endangered.

Are we so sure of this? Do we not make a mistake in thinking that the Creeds are our chief instruments in binding us together in unity? Surely thinking alike has no such unifying power as common prayer, common associations of worship, and a common loyalty to the great traditions of a common faith, and a supreme loyalty to the Personal Christ. The great mass of people in the recital of the Creed do not understand the articles in detail. What meaning does the average worshipper attach to the article, "of one substance

with the Father," or "He descended into Hell"? Far deeper and more spiritual bonds than the Creeds hold the Church together and inspire the people to go forward. It was generations after the Apostolic days that the Creeds, those great monuments built up gradually to express the Faith, took their place in public worship. The Creeds were the living and exact expression of the doctrine of those days; and the echo comes down to us through the ages of doctors, soldiers, saints, martyrs, and the whole people repeating and believing every sentence that they spoke, and with the original intent of their framers.

At the close of the American Revolution, when this Church separated from the Church of England, our fathers stated in our Book of Common Prayer that "this Church is very far from intending to depart from the Church of England in

any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship"; and yet, in adopting her Prayer Book, this Church dropped one of the three Creeds of the Mother Church, the Athanasian Creed. The Athanasian Creed still stands in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, and clergy and people are required by law to recite it on the great Feast Days. But one would have difficulty in deciding as to whether the Mother Church, with three historic Creeds, or this Church, with only two, is the more loyal to the Faith. Giving up a creed does not necessarily involve a loss of the faith for which the creed stands. It may even involve such a deepening of the faith that the form of expression seems too inadequate to satisfy the faithful.

I have said that the antiquity of the Creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene, their forms of expression adapted to their day, their emphasis of fundamentals,

invite varied and very free interpretation. The articles of these Creeds, too, are not of equal importance. To this I think all churchmen agree. To illustrate, the phrase, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God," was interpreted literally many centuries ago. To the people of fifty years ago, to myself as a boy, heaven was local, up there, and Jesus was taken up there bodily; it was to me what the man in the street would call "a real thing."

"I believe in the Resurrection of the body" used to mean, of course, the resurrection of the flesh, the same material body that was buried in the earth. As late as 1884, when in Westminster Abbey, I myself heard Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln, one of the most learned Biblical scholars of his day, object to the cremation of the dead on the ground that it would weaken faith in the resurrection

of the body. These words now have a deeper meaning, more spiritual than before, that He who humbled Himself and became obedient to death upon the Cross, who gave to us in His life the revelation of the Father, overcame the power of all spiritual enemies, overcame death, and entered again the life of the spirit victorious, his personality holding its integrity through to the end and in eternity.

Upon my return from England that summer, I found a group of people, some of them physicians, who had been given the impression by some prominent religious leaders that, because of its supposed overthrow of the doctrine of the Resurrection, cremation was a pagan form and forbidden by the Church. Fearing that this misunderstanding, based on such an unspiritual interpretation, would create an additional cleavage between science and religion, and determining to throw

my influence against such a cleavage, and in behalf of a more spiritual conception, I immediately joined a cremation organization, of which I have been ever since a Vice-President. I have no particular interest in the cremation or the burial of my body; but know that my action had a helpful influence in creating a right understanding.

I was brought up to believe that "Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"; and in my earlier ministry assumed, as has been assumed throughout a large part of the Christian era and in Christian theology, that this fact was an essential element in the Incarnation.

It is now well recognized that scholars are divided upon the question of the Virgin Birth, as to whether the stronger evidence leads to the confirmation of this as a fact, or whether it is a tradition

which must be reëxamined. These scholars are not mere critics and sceptics, but are upon either side men of equal reverence, faith, and belief in the Incarnation.

With the conservatism of my nature, I have always acceded to the tradition, but with a mind open to further light. Some thirty years ago, however, I was convinced that there is no essential connection between the belief in the Virgin Birth and a belief in the Incarnation. In giving expression to that conviction, which was founded on the careful study of a few American scholars, I was charged by friends dear to me with heresy. It is now a source of satisfaction to read in Bishop Gore's later works wherein he is defending the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, that he has come to the same conclusion.

There are, as we well know, clergymen, a number of them, who find it difficult if not

impossible to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, whose belief in the Incarnation is sincere and firm; indeed, whose belief has been made the firmer by their release from this doctrine. Their reasons are to them convincing; and inasmuch as the two Creeds stand for the essentials of the Faith, and as belief in the Virgin Birth is not to them an essential, I am clear that with an honest heart they may join in the recital of the Creeds.

I well know that this position may bring sorrow to those whose faith in the Incarnation, whose habits of thought and worship have been interwoven with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. But their interpretation of the Creeds and their comfort in them are in no way affected by the different interpretations of others.

Since my first canonical examinations, as Bishop I have never asked my candidates their position on that point; for

knowing the division of judgment among scholars and saintly men on the subject, I have not wanted to commit them to a decision before they have enough maturity of thought to make one. I believe that the results of this conduct have justified themselves. Those candidates have as a whole been loyal to the Faith of the Church, and especially to the truth of the Incarnation of our Lord.

Indeed, experience has convinced me that the vital test of a young man as he enters a high calling is not as to what particular doctrine he believes to-day, but what is the essential trend of his thought, what his attitude toward the ever-revealing truth; not in what he does, or thinks, but what, in the long run, he is, what spirit, character, or temper controls him. Hence, in examining young men for Holy Orders I delegate to the Examining Chaplains the testing as to their knowl-

edge and intellectual abilities, but I want to be sure as to what they are, their attitude of mind, their capacity of vital faith, their humility and their courage in facing in Christ's name the world and its revelations of error and truth.

I remember that as a young candidate my theological convictions were largely those of my last teachers. From these convictions I moved the very next day toward, I hope, a fuller knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ. Every day since then the emphasis and proportion of my beliefs have changed. By inheritance and temper I am a conservative. Taken off my guard, I should like to have things stay as they are. It is so comfortable to have habits of thought and life, principles and beliefs, that never alter. I should so enjoy life if I were always orthodox. What a relief it would be never to worry, think, or struggle! And then a shaft of

fresh truth, gleaming with heaven's brilliance, strikes across my path, and I leap toward it tingling with the spirit of adventure.

Some one wrote a while ago that the American youth are looking deep for the foundations of faith, they are fundamentalists. True in a sense; a strong structure must have strong foundations. But I like another figure better. I believe that the American youth, inheriting religious faith, mental powers, and alert bodies, are best won when faith is made an adventure, and when that adventure leads on through questions, struggles, sacrifice toward the truth. Surely that was the spirit of the young man of Nazareth, Judea, and Jerusalem. On and on He went, ever gathering, ever revealing Truth. "Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." "The Spirit of Truth will guide you into

all truth." Mark the challenge which brought Him to the Cross. "Ye seek to kill me as a man that hath told you the Truth." In Christ's service complete confidence in the truth has been my great source of exhilaration in these fifty years.

Moreover, I have found it impossible to stand still in thought and beliefs for two consecutive weeks. The movement of thought and action, religious, social, political, scientific, philosophic, has been such in fifty years that one cannot live and not move. One cannot hold fast to the dock by the cable at the stern as the ship sails out. With sails full and helm true, but with the charted stars and continents, with unerring compass, she leaps into the open sea.

I have been speaking of the doctrine and Creeds of the Church as they relate to the clergy. We must remember that the

laity have a right to the same consideration as the clergy. Thousands are in doubt on some points in the Creeds, but they love the Church, they want to recite the Creeds; they stumble, however, at some one article, and feel that they cannot with intellectual honesty take their part in the recital of the whole. When worshipping in a congregation, my attention has been compelled to the number of men of Christian character and faith, many of them communicants, who will join in prayers and hymns full of doctrinal significance, but whose mouths are shut when they come to the Creeds. Spiritually they are one with the Faith which these Creeds attempt to express; intellectually they assume that they must support every article, and with an interpretation taught them perhaps in their boyhood which they cannot with honesty support to-day.

Let us recall again that most of the worshippers in our churches are unable to make doctrinal distinctions, and cannot therefore intelligently interpret the articles of the Creeds, and yet they yearn to take part in reciting them.

When we meet their doubts and questions, may we not turn them to that illuminating answer to the question in the Catechism, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?" "I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world; in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind; and in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God."

As a people, we of the West are very matter of fact, and in statements of religious faith assume that everything must be definite, logical and complete. In the singing of hymns, however, we give

ourselves more freedom, and in religious poetry we do have some, though not very much, imagination. Hence our conception of the Creeds is as of exact, formal statements to be interpreted as we interpret the Constitution of the United States. If that conception stands, I am sure that unless the Church is ready to resolve itself into a sect wherein all members think alike, there is no alternative but to permit those who cannot accept this or that article to be silent at that point.

But surely when we want to express in warmest terms our loyalty to the principles of this Nation, we do not read aloud the Constitution; we break forth in the National Anthem, or some other song or poem, and we are often thoughtless as to whether we know the exact words or their meaning. I am more and more deeply impressed with the conviction that, if

we are to hope that the whole body of Christian people joining in the worship of God in our churches are to gain the inspiration and power which comes with the common recital of a common loyalty, they must be taught that this is the meaning of the recital or singing of the Creeds in worship. We proclaim in words endeared by association, hallowed by the ages, our loyalty to God the Father, his Son, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot define the Triune God. We understand but little; but we do each and all stand for and depend upon our Heavenly Father, the loving Saviour, and the Eternal Spirit of Truth. Believing this, we may all join in the ancient Creeds of the Church.

In these last few pages I may seem to have run off into a theological treatise, or an attempt to reinterpret the Faith for others. That would be beyond my abilities. I have been trying to tell the simple

story of my own personal experience in the Church during the past fifty years.

The convictions and interpretations to which I have come are not ideal, nor are they necessarily a final solution of all the difficulties involved. In naming the four alternatives, I tried to suggest that I have not been able to discover any ideal expression of the faith which will meet all conditions. A dead faith may have a static, formal creed. But so long as men think and faith grows from day to day, the expression of faith must be living also, and its interpretation change with the growth of the living faith. The language in which one expresses his faith to-day may be archaic to-morrow. And yet, unless we dissolve into pure individualism, we must have some common forms of religious expression. The new wine will burst the old wineskins unless the skins are elastic enough to meet the pressure. I

believe that the best practical result, so far as we can now see, is in the use of the ancient Creeds and forms. But creeds and other expressions of a common faith are a growth rather than an immediate creation, and we are sure that the Holy Spirit will guide the Church to what is wise and true.

Personally I cannot but feel that the Church is to-day placing undue confidence in her emphasis upon formal Creeds and their recital. It seems to be assumed by some good people that unless the Creed is recited, the service has no backbone of belief; and if any one criticizes the form or phraseology of one of the ancient Creeds, it is assumed that he is weak in the Faith. The fact is that his criticism may spring from a living faith which is restive under necessarily imperfect expression; it is not the Faith that is inadequate, but the form of expression of the Faith.

May I mention an example of what seems to be an unsuitable use of the Apostles' Creed? In the reception of the child or adult into the Church at baptism, this Creed is the doctrinal test, "Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed?" If this is to be interpreted in the free way which I have already suggested that the Creeds should be interpreted, as the free expression of faith in Christ, very good.

But if this promise involves the acceptance of all the articles of the Creed in their literal sense, I ask, as I asked in the House of Bishops at the General Convention a year ago, "What right has any branch of the Catholic Church to set up a bar of entrance to the Church which is higher than that used by the Apostles themselves?" And it was with great gratification that I heard the beloved and

conservative Bishop of Southern Ohio rise and formally offer as an amendment to the present Baptismal Office the expression, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The amendment was voted down, but the Bishop turned to me, saying, "We have started a movement which will continue after we have gone."

I just mentioned the fact that many worshippers who take full part in the service hesitate as they come to the Creed. Has it occurred to us that it is a characteristic of some of the finest saints that the very fulness and sincerity of their faith make them sensitive to the repetition of phrases with a different intent from that of their first composers? They therefore remain silent through the whole Creed, although they join heartily in words of prayer and praise in which are embodied the same doctrines.

May not the day come when these

saints will receive such consideration from the Church as will enable them to express their faith in a way which does not compel them to put it into formal creeds? Meanwhile we will try to show them the intellectual consistency in reciting the Creed as a whole, as a free expression of our loyalty to God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. History and the lives of the Saints have demonstrated the power of the simultaneous voices of the faithful ringing out the Creeds, bringing vigor, courage, comfort, and hope to all.

III

In this sketch of changes in my religious thought and my faith, I have dwelt upon the two salient features of the past: the reinterpretation of the Scripture under the Spirit of Truth, with its increase of spiritual significance and power; and the reinterpretation of the Prayer Book, the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Church, with its freer interpretation of the ancient forms and creeds and with its concentration upon the fundamental truth of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

There has been developing in my thought and experience a third feature which I have already hinted at, but which, I believe, runs deeper than the thoughts we have touched.

This discussion of reinterpretation of Scriptures and Creeds, this debate upon

the Bible and the Faith, whether in the form of fundamentalism or modernism, conservatism or liberalism, is interesting to us Americans; we enjoy crossing intellectual swords, we like to rest our faith upon logical foundations; and up to a point it is well. Straight and hard thinking, the expression of faith in dogmatic form, differences, sharp differences, in belief, are natural and necessary, and keep the Church and her Faith steady in the changing tides of thought. But — and this is my point — I am coming more and more positively to the conclusion that these are not religion, and that these discussions often lead to the evasion of religion. Religion is in the personal communion of God and man. The Christian religion is that communion expressed through loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ.

In studying the Creeds, I have been im-

pressed with the thought that they are not sufficient in and of themselves, nor always necessary in expressing the Faith of the people in worship. For instance, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ His only Son"; what is there in these phrases, except as they are a reflection of our spiritual experience? We name God the Father, the Creator, but, what is there in the phrase to show that He is a loving and not a malevolent God, as some people think? "And Jesus Christ His only Son"; what is there in the Apostles' Creed that suggests Him, His personality, and the motive for His humiliation and sacrifice? And yet we who know the Father and the Son read into these words our interpretation and definitions, a beneficent Father and a loving Son. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

I cannot but think that the Church and those who framed the Liturgy felt this, and in their spiritual, practical way anticipated it. For illustration, may I turn to the Liturgy, the preparation for the Church's Great Feast; that part which we commonly call the Ante-Communion? The Creed stands as in some respects the climax to the preparation; and I suppose that a large proportion of the faithful think of it as the backbone of the whole. And yet, as I have just said, there is apart from what we read into it very little that is really spiritual or that bears on character.

If we look back, however, to the beginning of the Ante-Communion, we discover a logical progress. At the head stands that most spiritual and uplifting of all forms of expression of faith, the Lord's Prayer. Caught up into a higher atmosphere we then, as have all the Saints in preparing

to meet God, ask for the cleansing of our hearts that "we may perfectly love Thee and magnify Thy Holy Name." With hearts purified, we listen to the Commandments and pray that God will incline our hearts to obey His laws.

I have sometimes wondered, by the way, if those who insist upon the literal interpretation of every article of the Creed have considered the responsive prayer to each of the Ten Commandments. We pray, for instance, that our hearts may be inclined to keep the Sabbath Day holy, when as a matter of fact we are not going to keep the Sabbath Day at all. We freely interpret the Ten Commandments under the spirit of the two great Commandments of our Lord; and we read into our prayer the hallowing of the Christian Sunday, not the seventh but the first day of the week.

The emphasis on the moral law, the two

great Commandments, is of the genius of our Church; in the highest stretches of the spirit we recall to ourselves our duty to God and neighbor. Through the practical religious and moral life comes fuller vision of God. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is at this point the lack of that emphasis as compared with that of dogmatic statement and ecclesiastical requirements that turns many a high-minded man and woman from the Church.

Abraham Lincoln, the typical American, is reported to have said, "When any church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification of membership the Saviour's condensed statement of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul."

Having heard these commands and in the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel caught the dominant spiritual thought for the day, we are then prepared to read into the Creed the spiritual and moral meaning and power of our faith, and join in it as our Battle Hymn, our Song of Praise, our Confession of Faith.

What I want to bring out is that the spiritual and moral emphasis has a place, to my mind a higher place, than that of the doctrine in the standards of the Church. They all belong together, however, as a living whole. When, therefore, we recite the Creed, our first care is not as to whether we believe each article according to the early interpretation, whether we are orthodox in our beliefs, but whether we express in our lives the beliefs that we speak. I find it a mighty good thing to be honest with myself and ask myself if, while I am intellectually sensitive in the

saying of the Creed, I am morally and spiritually as sensitive in saying it. It is at this point that the Episcopal Church has, I believe, a special contribution to make to the religious life of to-day. Its genius is practical and ethical as well as doctrinal and spiritual; these elements are inextricably bound up in our doctrine, discipline, and worship. The test of our sincerity is in the showing forth this faith, not only with our lips, but in our lives.

A short time ago a friend said to me, with something of a sigh, "Is this movement of thought, this fight for the Faith, this meeting of problems, going to keep on? Has not the last half-century fought most of the questions through to a finish?"

I do not so read the history of the Church, the life of Christ or of His Apostles. What do we mean when we sing the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers"; or,

"The Son of God goes forth to War"? Shall we throw them out of the Hymnal and retain, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest"?

The future as I see it is going to bring to the Church fresh problems and battles, intellectual and spiritual, and, if we hold steadfast to the Spirit of Truth, victories also, which will be equal to any in the past. Earnest, truth-loving scholars who are now studying and analyzing the New Testament, the life of Christ, and the history of the Apostolic Church, are liable to bring forth results which may again test the faith of ourselves and our children.

What I, a man of over threescore years and ten, do plead for from my contemporaries and the men and women of middle age is that they trust the younger generation to meet these problems in their own way. We are trusting young men with large responsibilities and action in

the van of science, business, art, medicine, and all the callings. Shall we distrust them in meeting the fresh revelations of thought and reinterpreting them for the Christian Faith?

The fact is that many young men of force and promise who see opportunities for forward movement in other callings, have the impression, gotten from men and writers who are called religious leaders, that the Church is static, that its belief must stand just as it has for generations. "The Faith once delivered to the Saints" is not a tightly packed parcel, but a living, vigorous Body with soul and spiritual powers. I ask every older reader of this little book to kindle the enthusiasm of the youth and gain their confidence by trusting their loyalty to the truth, believing that through that loyalty they will lead our children closer and closer to Him who is the Truth.

And as for the young men and women, if you will keep your heart sound, your life pure, your thinking straight, and your spirit humble, I know that in Christ you will find your leader, and the Spirit will beckon you on to ever fuller Truth.

THE END

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 09938 145 9